ATMOSPHERE

BOOK CLUB KIT

DISCUSSION GUIDE

1. Joan dreams of becoming an astronaut in a time when very few women are given the opportunity. What internal strengths does she draw upon during the processes of applying, training, and then practicing for this career? Have you ever been in a situation where you were underestimated, or not given equal opportunities? What strengths did you draw upon?

2. Describe Joan's relationship with her sister, Barbara. What bonds them? What are their fundamental differences?

3. How would you characterize Joan's relationship with her niece, Frances? What does Joan provide for Frances that Barbara doesn't? How does this triangle of relationships change over time?

4. "She didn't want to lower herself to the game men played," Joan thinks. "To be like them. Why would she follow people who were lost?" How do Joan, Vanessa, Lydia, and Donna all react differently to being women in a male-dominated field?

5. When Joan does finally make it to space, it's not what she expected. How does she process the realization that her life's dream has changed? Have you ever achieved a dream, only to discover you want something different now?

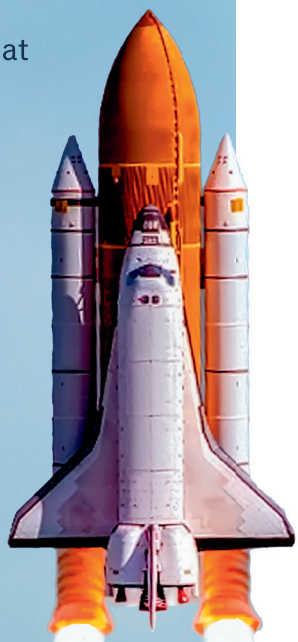
6. "People say opposites attract, but Joan found this to almost never be true. People just couldn't see the ways they were drawn to exactly who they feared—or hoped—they might be." Do you agree or disagree? Discuss.

7. Which of the other mission crew members were you most drawn to? Whose arc did you find most moving? Most surprising?

8. If you were making a movie or TV show of *Atmosphere*, who would you cast in the lead roles?

9. What did you think of the book's ending? Why do you think the author chose to end the book that way, especially with that final line? What do you imagine for the characters in 10 years?

10. If you've read other books by Taylor Jenkins Reid, what themes does *Atmosphere* share with her previous novels? What sets it apart?



FOR STARGAZING PARTIES

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BOÖTES Also known as **the Herdsman**, it includes **Arcturus**, which is the fourth-brightest star in the sky, and is associated with agricultural activities in ancient cultures.

CORONA BOREALIS Also known as the **Northern Crown** in Greek mythology, it is shaped like a semi-circle. It includes an eclipsing binary star and a variable star that periodically dims.

DRACO Represents **Ladon**, a dragon in Greek mythology defeated by **Hercules**, and is one of the largest and most ancient constellations.

HERCULES Depicts the Herculean feat of defeating **Ladon** the dragon to obtain the **Golden Fleece**, and is the fifth-largest constellation in the sky.

URSA MINOR Also known as the **Little Dipper**, it is particularly famous for including the **North Star** at the very top of its shape.

URSA MAJOR Also known as the **Great Bear,** it is the third-largest constellation in the Northern Hemisphere. Its brightest stars form the **Big Dipper** asterism.

TIPS

Find a dark location with minimal light pollution to make seeing faint stars easier.

Consider a higher elevation for a better view.

Consider using binoculars or a telescope for a more magnified and detailed view of the night sky.

Use the constellation chart to help guide your experience.

PIONEERING WOMEN IN SPACE TIMELINE

This is just a select list of the thousands of women who, for decades, have contributed to NASA and spaceflight. From the women who braided electrical wires to those calculating shuttle trajectories and conducting experiments aboard the ISS, the work of these women has been instrumental to the space program. Visit nasa.gov/women-at-nasa to learn more about the women who have made, and continue to make, spaceflight possible.

1953

Katherine Johnson joins NASA (then NACA) as a human computer and as one of the first Black women to work for the agency. She would become one of the most influential mathematicians at NASA and her work calculating space trajectories were essential to the Space Shuttle program. For three decades, Johnson, along with her colleagues **Mary Jackson** and **Dorothy Vaughn**, would contribute vital work to making spaceflight possible.

1955

Mathematician **Annie Easley** begins her three-decades-long career at NASA as a human computer. She would make significant contributions to NASA's space program, including her work on the Centaur project, which would become the foundation for launching future satellites and space vehicles.

1959-1960

The **First Lady Astronaut Trainees** were a select group of women who went through rigorous testing–the same used to select NASA's astronaut candidates. This group, dubbed Mercury 13, were the first 13 women to pass the tests. But in 1962, the program was shuttered. NASA would not allow equipment to be used to test women, as they had no intention of accepting women into the astronaut training program.

1963

Valentina Tereshkova, a Russian engineer and cosmonaut, became the first woman to travel to space.

1968

Frances Northcutt became the first woman engineer to work in NASA's Mission Control. Later, Northcutt and her colleagues' calculations and research would be paramount to rescuing and safely returning the Apollo 13 mission back to Earth.

1970

Aerospace Engineer **Judith Love Cohen**'s work on the Abort Guidance System was also instrumental in saving the crew of the Apollo 13 mission. Fun Fact: She also happens to be actor Jack Black's mother.

1983

Astrophysicist **Sally Ride** became the first American woman to travel to space. Ride was also the first woman to serve as Capsule Communicator (CAPCOM) at NASA in 1981.

1984

On her second trip to space, Russian cosmonaut **Svetlana Savitskaya** became the first woman to perform a spacewalk.

Anna Lee Fisher became the first mother to travel to space.

1986

Christa McAuliffe was set to be the first teacher in space. McAuliffe perished, along with **Judy Resnik** and four other astronauts, when the Space Shuttle *Challenger* exploded during its ascent.

1992

A medical doctor and engineer, **Mae Jemison** became the first Black woman to go to space.

1995

Eileen Collins became the first woman to pilot a NASA space shuttle. In 1999, she would become the first female commander.

2008

Peggy Whitson became the first woman to command the International Space Station.

2019

Engineers **Jessica Meir** and **Christina Koch** performed the first all-woman spacewalk.

2022

Nicole Mann became NASA's first Indigenous woman astronaut to visit space.

NASA CAREER QUIZ

Are you better suited to Mission Control or Spacewalking?

1. When faced with a complex problem, do you prefer to:

- **A** Analyze the situation thoroughly and plan a detailed solution.
- **B** Jump in and start working hands-on to find a solution.

2. In a team setting, do you find yourself:

- **A** Preferring to work independently and focus on your tasks.
- **B** Engaging actively with team members and adapting to group dynamics.

3. How do you handle stress in high-pressure situations?

- **A** You remain calm and focused, using logic to navigate challenges.
- **B** You thrive on the adrenaline and adapt quickly to changing circumstances.

4. When organizing tasks, do you:

- **A** Create detailed plans and prioritize meticulously.
- **B** Prefer a flexible approach, adjusting as you go.

5. Do you consider yourself more:

- **A** Introverted and detail-oriented, enjoying structured environments.
- **B** Extroverted and adaptable, enjoying dynamic environments.

6. In terms of physical activity, do you:

- **A** Prefer tasks that require mental focus and precision.
- **B** Enjoy activities that require physical strength and agility.

7. When achieving goals, do you:

- **A** Focus on the process and ensuring everything is done correctly.
- **B** Focus on overcoming challenges and achieving results.

8. How do you approach unexpected challenges?

- **A** By identifying the specific problem and finding a logical solution.
- **B** By adapting quickly and using practical skills to resolve issues.

MOSTLY A'S

Congratulations! You have been assigned a role in Mission Control. Jobs at Mission Control require individuals to be calm, highly organized, analytical, and detail-oriented.

MOSTLY B'S

Congratulations! Suit up for your first Spacewalk. This role is best for people who are physically strong, practical, achievement-oriented, and adaptable.